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## On the Text of Job xxvi. 12, 13.

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THE Massoretic text reads :

בְּכֹחַ יָנֵעַ הַיָּם <sup>12</sup>  
 וּבְתוֹבֵנָתוֹ מִחַץ רָהֵב;  
 בְּרוּחוֹ שְׁמִים שִׁפְרָה <sup>13</sup>  
 חֲלָלָה יָדוֹ נָחַשׁ בָּרָח;

The LXX render as follows (edition of H. B. Swete, 1891) :

<sup>12</sup> ἰσχύι κατέπαυσεν τὴν θάλασσαν,  
 ἐπιστήμῃ δὲ ἔστρωται τὸ κῆτος.  
<sup>13</sup> κλειῖθρα δὲ οὐρανοῦ δεδοικασιν αὐτόν·  
 προστάγματι δὲ ἐθανάτωσεν δράκοντα ἀποστάτην.

The reading of the Peshitto (text of Samuel Lee) is :

בְּחִילָה נֵעַר בִּימָא <sup>12</sup>  
 וּבְחַכְמָתָהּ מִחָא סִנְיָא  
 בְּרוּחָהּ שְׁמִיא מְדַבֵּר <sup>13</sup>  
 וּקְשֵׁלַת אִידָהּ לַחֲיָא דְעֶרֶק

In verse 12, besides adopting the *Qrē* וּבְתוֹבֵנָתוֹ, Siegfried (*The Book of Job*, 1893) changes יָנֵעַ into נֵעַר “in accordance with” κατέπαυσεν of the LXX and נֵעַר of the Peshitto. But there are grave objections to this emendation :

1. Καταπαύειν, ‘to cause to rest, make to cease,’ is not a translation of נֵעַר, ‘to rebuke,’ and is never used as such in any other passage in the Old Testament. In the fourteen occurrences of נֵעַר as a verb, the LXX render eight times by ἐπιτιμᾶν (Gen. xxxvii. 10; Ruth ii. 16; Ps. ix. 6, lxxviii. 31, cvi. 9, cxix. 21; Zech. iii. 2 *bis*), twice by ἀπειλεῖν (Isa. liv. 9; Nah. i. 4), and once each by ἀποσκορακίζειν (Isa. xvii. 13), ἀφορίζειν (Mal. ii. 3), διαστέλλειν (Mal. iii. 11), and συλλοιδορεῖν (Jer. xxix. 27). None of these Greek words have the same meaning as καταπαύειν. The derivatives of נֵעַר are likewise never rendered in the LXX by a derivative of καταπαύειν, but

most frequently by *ἐπιτίμησις*. We conclude, then, that neither the meaning of *κατέπαυσεν* nor the usage of the LXX points to *נָעַר* as the correct Heb. reading.

2. The occurrence of the noun *נִעָרָה*, 'rebuke' (*מִנְעָרָתָהּ*), at the end of verse 11 may have induced the Syriac translator to suppose that *רָנַע* in verse 12 was a scribal error for *נָעַר*. If the pillars of heaven were astonished at the divine rebuke, it seemed natural to say immediately thereafter that he rebuked the sea, especially since the consonants are the same in *נָעַר* and *רָנַע*. Or the change may have already taken place in the Hebrew manuscripts from which the Peshitto translation was made. Under the influence of *נִעָרָה*, the change would have been easy, as just pointed out. On the other hand, had the Heb. reading been originally *נָעַר*, the change to *רָנַע* is improbable. More likely still is a suggestion from Professor G. F. Moore, that *נָעַר* is "to be explained as a translation by metathesis, in which the Syrian interpreter probably followed Jewish guidance."

3. But the weightiest objection to Siegfried's emendation is that it obscures the reference of the passage to the cosmogonic myth, according to which a deity slays the dragon (*Tiāmat*, *תִּימָת*) before the work of creation can proceed. In the Assyrian-Babylonian version of this myth we read how *Marduk* slew *Tiāmat*, but not how he rebuked her. The *יָם* of 12<sup>a</sup> is not the sea, but the sea-dragon, as in Job vii. 12,

דָּגִים אֲנִי אִם תִּנִּין  
כִּי תִשֹּׁם עָלַי מִשְׁמֶר:

Am I a dragon or a sea-monster,  
That thou settest a watch over me?

The Heb. reading *רָנַע* is, then, to be retained. True, this stem in the *Qal* is commonly intransitive. It is possible that 12<sup>a</sup> had originally a *Hiphil* form, and that the *ה* was lost owing to its nearness to *ה* in the preceding word *בִּכְחוֹ*. But it is more probable that the *Qal* of *רָנַע* had also a transitive force.

Whether the *יָם* and the *תַּרְחַב* of verse 12 are the same dragon or different does not now concern us. In the Assyrian-Babylonian version of the story *Tiāmat* is supported by her husband *Kingu*, and both are slain by *Marduk*.

Passing now to verse 13, it is evident that the second half verse is another reference to the combat between the deity and the dragon, 'His hand pierced the fleeing serpent.' The presumption, therefore, is that in 13<sup>a</sup> we have a similar reference. In 12<sup>a</sup> God stills the *יָם*

by his power, in 12<sup>b</sup> he smites רָחַב by his understanding, in 13<sup>b</sup> his hand pierces the fleeing serpent. Is it likely that in 13<sup>a</sup> the author is referring to something else?

Some critics, as Delitzsch (*Hiob*, 1876, p. 338), holding to the Hebrew text, translate as do our Revisers,

‘By his spirit the heavens are garnished.’

Delitzsch renders the whole verse,

*Durch seinen Hauch wird Heiterkeit der Himmel,  
Durchbohrt hat seine Hand den flüchtigen Drachen.*

Here, according to Delitzsch, the dragon is the one of the heavens, and his piercing, the means by which the heavens are made beautiful. He attacks the sun and produces an eclipse. The sun is set free by a deep wound given to the dragon, which robs him of his power.

Dillmann (*Hiob*, 1891, p. 227) translates 13<sup>a</sup>, *Durch seinen Hauch wird heiter der Himmel*, and explains שְׁפָרָה as a substantive. ‘The meaning is that the still beclouded heavens are suddenly cleared by the wind which he sends; but not, that the heavens in general are beautiful through his creative spirit.’ J. G. E. Hoffmann (*Hiob*, 1891, p. 75) reads שְׁפָרָה and translates, *Durch seinen Wind klärt sich der Himmel*. Gustav Bickell (*Das Buch Job*, 1894, p. 43) considers the sense to be, *Glanz haucht Er, wo Gewölk war*.

The LXX understood 13<sup>a</sup> otherwise. Their translation seems to point to a Heb. reading:

בָּרַיִחַ שְׁמַם שְׁפָרָה.

‘the bolts of the heavens shuddered before him.’ This involves three slight changes of the Hebrew text. Whether their original so read, or whether they changed the text because they did not understand it, one cannot say.

H. Gunkel in his suggestive work, *Schöpfung und Chaos* (1895, p. 36), adopts the reading of the LXX and translates:

*Die Riegel des Himmels schauern vor ihm.*

He explains the *Riegel des Himmels* as a reference to the bolt with which *Marduk* closed the skies after he had made the heavens from half of the slain *Tiāmat*. ‘The sense is that the bolts of the heavens fear to transgress God’s command, and to let their waters flow down except when he so orders.’ While this explanation does establish a certain connection between 13<sup>a</sup> and the Babylonian myth, it seems

nevertheless somewhat far-fetched and unnatural. Not only so, but this shutting of the doors of heaven by a bolt is in the myth subsequent to the combat. And does it not seem improbable, if 13<sup>b</sup> refers to the combat, that 13<sup>a</sup> should refer to a phase of the story which follows the combat?

We pass to the Syriac of 13<sup>a</sup>:

ברוחה שמיא מדבר,

'by his spirit he guides the heavens.'

That מדבר does not point to שפרה is evident from the usage of the Peshitto in other passages where the stem שפר occurs (Gen. xlix. 21; Ex. i. 15; Num. xxxiii. 23; Ps. xvi. 6; Dan. iii. 32, iv. 9, 18, 24, vi. 2. Two of these cases are proper names). In every instance the Peshitto makes use of the same stem שפר, and would doubtless have done so here if the translator had found this stem in his Hebrew text. He would have been delighted to say, 'By his spirit he beautified the heavens.' The participial reading, מדבר, may be due to the ם at the end שָׁמִים, or it may be a free rendering of the Hebrew, intended to express the idea of God's perpetual guidance of the heavens. It is probable that the Syriac translator had before him the true text in the case of the last word in 13<sup>a</sup>, and of this the rendering מדבר seems to give evidence.

My suggestion is to emend the text into

ברוחת שמים שברה,

'by the winds of the heavens he [God] broke him [or her] to pieces,'

i.e. ים or רִיחַב. The word שבר may be *Qal* or *Piel*, and the suffix ה may represent a masculine or a feminine object.

In favor of this emendation may be urged:

1) That it makes of 13<sup>a</sup> a third statement of God's victory in the combat with the powers of chaos, and not an inapposite reference to the heavenly bolts.

2) That, as in 12<sup>a</sup> and 12<sup>b</sup>, it introduces with ב a third means of God's victory (12<sup>a</sup> 'power,' 12<sup>b</sup> 'understanding,' 13<sup>a</sup> 'the winds of the heavens').

3) That it gives a striking parallel to the Assyrian-Babylonian version of the myth, according to which the winds are important weapons and allies of *Marduk* in the struggle, of which we seem to have also an echo in the רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים of Gen. i. 2.

In the fourth tablet of the Babylonian cosmogonic myth *Marduk* attacks *Tidmat* with many winds, including the Northwind, the

Southwind, the Eastwind, the Westwind, the Seven Winds, the Hurricane, etc. (Delitzsch, *Assyrische Lesestücke*<sup>3</sup>, p. 97, l. 7-12). When in the combat *Tiāmat* opens her mouth to swallow the hurricane, *Marduk* causes this wind to enter, so that she cannot close her lips; whereupon other powerful winds fill her body, and *Marduk* slays her with his weapon (*ibid.* p. 98, l. 13 ff.). If, then, Job xxvi. 13 says that God shattered the dragon with the winds of the heavens, the passage preserves for us one of the most striking traits of that remarkable story.

4) That it finds support in the reading of the Peshitto, מִדְּבַר. With the stem שִׁבַּר before him in the Hebrew, the translator should have chosen the regular Syriac equivalent תִּבַּר, as so often elsewhere in the O. T. He may have done so in this case. Or the change to דִּבַּר may have been made by himself or by a later copyist because he did not understand the passage. But the choice of the stem דִּבַּר points strongly to תִּבַּר and to Heb. שִׁבַּר. Failing to understand the passage, the idea that God should 'lead' or 'rule' the heavens by his spirit seemed to the translator or the copyist a better idea than that he should shatter the heavens, or shatter something else with the winds of the heavens.

It is not a serious difficulty in the way of the proposed emendation that the stem שִׁבַּר is not commonly used in regard to living objects. In the O. T. the object which is broken is usually inanimate, — reeds, vessels, yokes, arms, bones, bows, etc. But occasionally שִׁבַּר is also used of persons, as 1 Ki. xiii. 26; Prov. vi. 15, xxix. 1; Ezek. xxx. 8; Dan. viii. 25. It might therefore be so employed in Job xxvi. 13. In the Babylonian story of the combat this stem occurs, though there it is used of the weapons of the *Tiāmat's* allies. After *Marduk* has slain the dragon, the story says *kakkêšunu ušabbir*, 'Their weapons he broke to pieces' (Delitzsch, *Assyr. Lesest.* p. 99, l. 28).

'His hand pierced the fleeing serpent' has its commentary in the carving on a seal representing *Marduk* as pursuing with a dagger the dragon, which flees before him in the form of a serpent (cf. the sketch in George Smith's *Chaldean Account of Genesis*, ed. A. H. Sayce, p. 90, Scribners, N. Y.).

In conclusion I offer the following translation of the two verses :

By his strength he stilled the sea-monster,  
And by his skill he smote Rahab;  
By the winds of the heavens he broke him to pieces;  
His hand pierced the fleeing serpent.